

REFLECTIONS ON DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR THE ROER4D PROJECT

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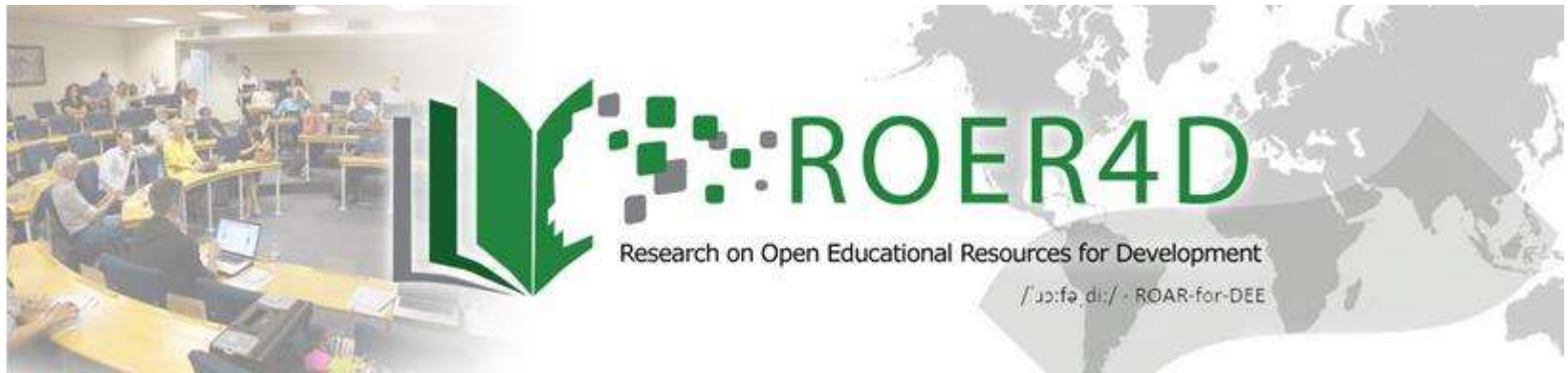
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Reflections on developing an evaluation and communications strategy for the ROER4D project

Sukaina Walji and Sarah Goodier
ROER4D Communications and Evaluation Advisors
Presentation for DECI-2 workshop
Cape Town, 4 May 2016

<http://www.slideshare.net/roer4d>



Overview

- Introduce the ROER4D project
- Developing the ROER4D evaluation and communications strategies (supporting/enabling project objectives)
- New and renewed insights
- What worked and what could be improved

Research on Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D)

- *In what ways, for whom and under what circumstances can the **adoption of OER** address the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality and affordable education and what is its impact in the Global South?*

A world map with the landmasses in light gray. A large, semi-transparent green area highlights the 'Global South' region, which includes South America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. The text 'in the Global South' is written in green over this highlighted area.

in the Global South

Research on Open Educational Resources for Development in the Global South

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL POLICY, PRACTICE and RESEARCH in developing countries
by better understanding the use and impact of OER

August 2013 - February 2017

PROJECT CLUSTERS

OER
Desktop Review

OER Survey

Academics'
adoption of OER

Teacher educators'
adoption of OER

OER
adoption in one
country

OER Impact
studies

Baseline
educational
expenditure



roer4d.org
[facebook.com/
ResearchOERforDevelopment](https://facebook.com/ResearchOERforDevelopment)
twitter.com/roer4d

 **ROER4D**
Research on Open Educational Resources for Development
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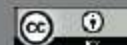

**wawasan
open UNIVERSITY**
the people's university


IDRC
International Development
Research Centre

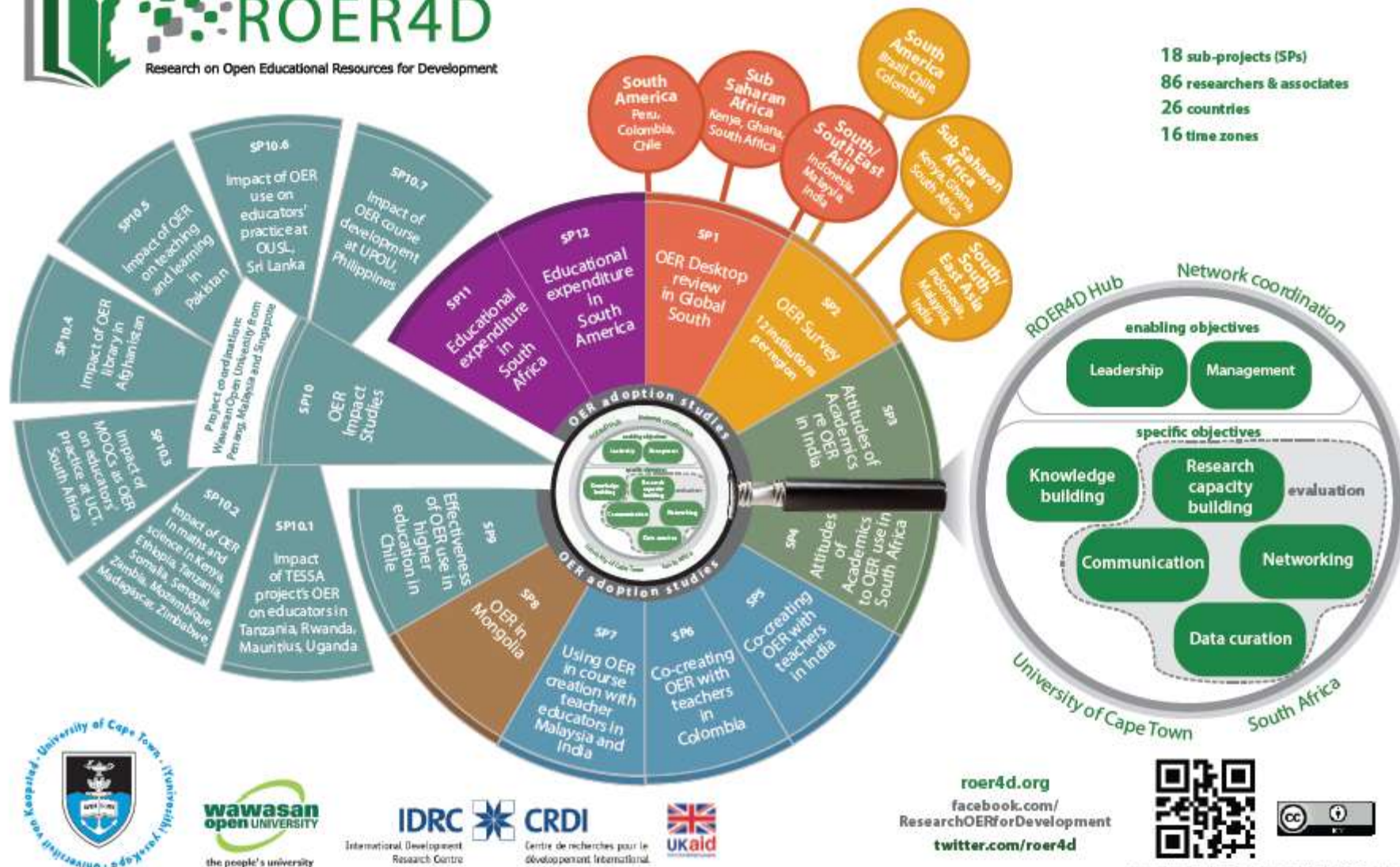

CRDI
Centre de recherches pour le
développement international


UKaid
UK Foreign & Commonwealth
Office

created by Rindina Carstens and the ROER4D team



18 sub-projects (SPs)
86 researchers & associates
26 countries
16 time zones



ROER4D Project Objectives

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice
5. Curate and disseminate output as open content



ROER4D Key Evaluation Areas

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice
5. Curate and disseminate output as open content

EVALUATION



ROER4D Key Evaluation Areas

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice
5. Curate and disseminate output as open content

EVALUATION

Evaluation focused on the Network Hub activity; Using a UFE framework



ROER4D Key Evaluation Areas

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
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EVALUATION

Evaluation focused on the Network Hub activity; Using a UFE framework

PIUs are members of the Network Hub team



ROER4D Key Evaluation Areas

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EVALUATION

Evaluation focused on the Network Hub activity; Using a UFE framework

PIUs are members of the Network Hub team

Iterative engagement

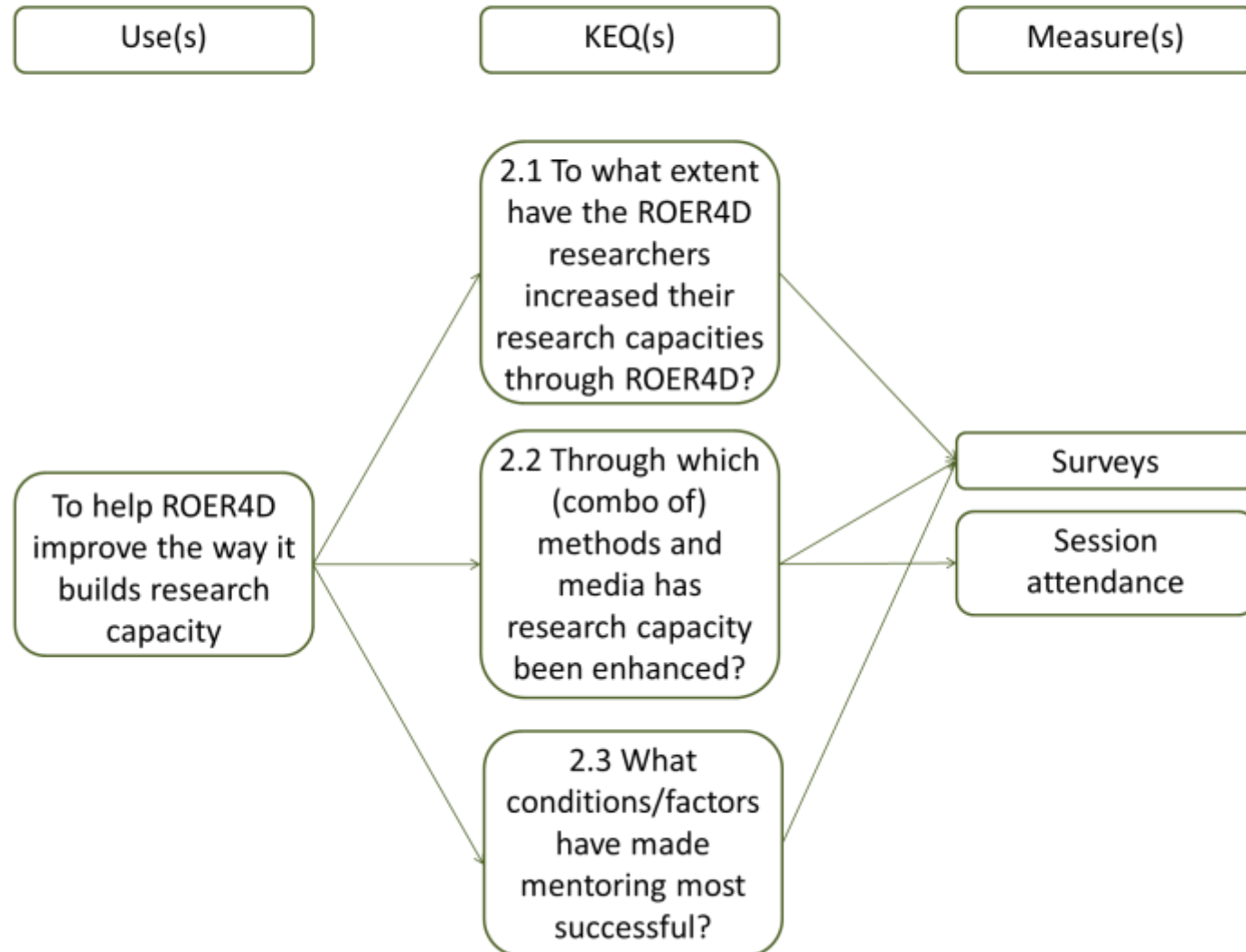


Evaluation plan summary: 2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers

Summary of Objective 2: Research Capacity Building

- Build the research capacity of OER researchers

Updated:
March 2016



Examples of supporting and enabling project direction

2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers

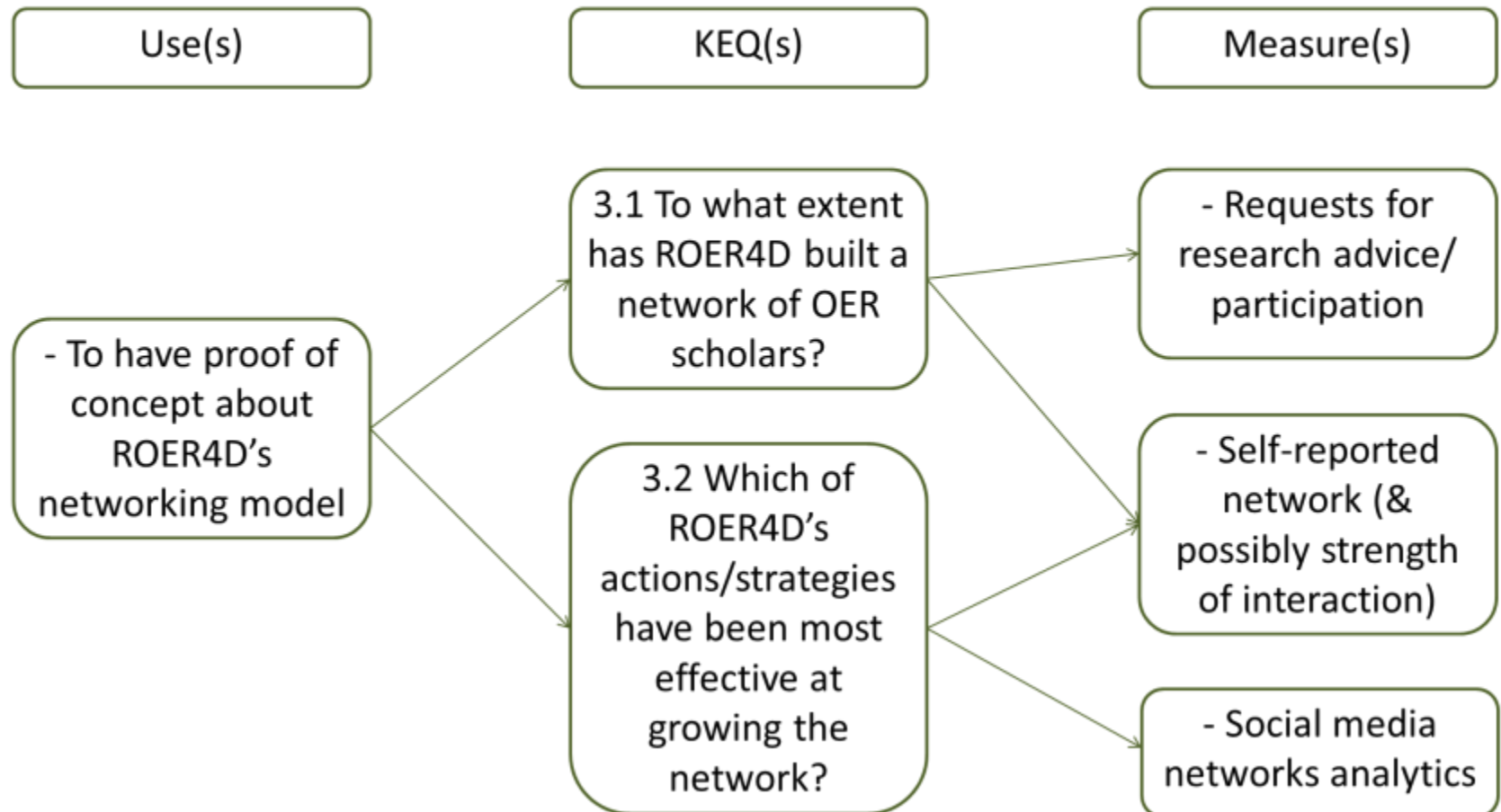
- Evaluation data showed that the initial series of webinars (run in 2014) experienced varying degrees of success:
 - As this was run as a series, decreasing attendance was an issue
 - Several barriers to attendance (e.g. timezones)
 - Researchers found supporting materials and recordings available helpful for review purposes
- Changes in timing and number of sessions implemented in 2015 webinars

Evaluation plan summary: 3. Build a network of OER scholars

Summary of Objective 3: Networking

- Build a network of OER scholars

Updated:
March 2016



Examples of supporting and enabling project direction

3. Build a network of OER scholars

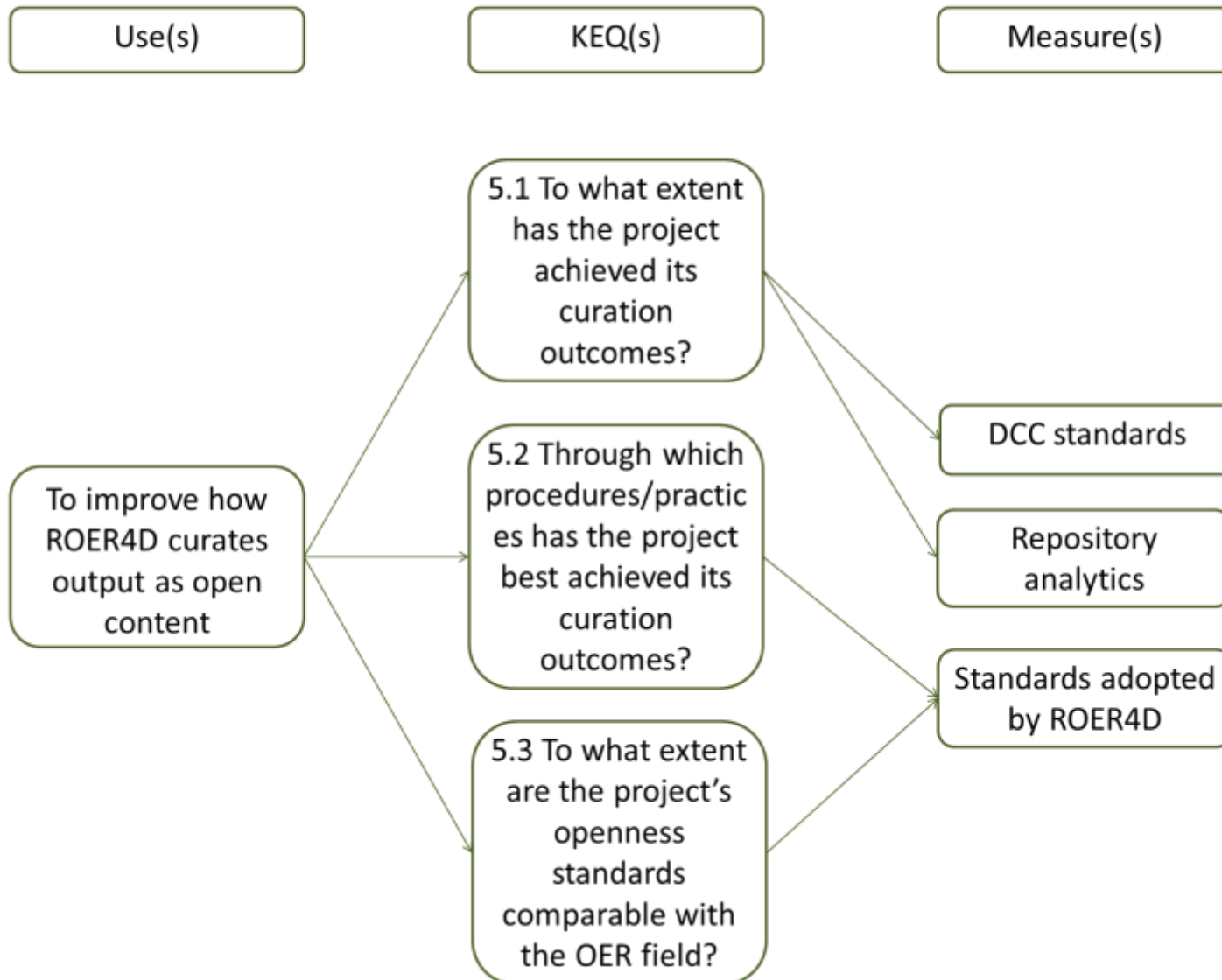
- Tracking the project PI's network growth over time has fed into strategic decisions in terms of conference attendance discussions
- View video visualisation of PI's network growth:
- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0muHoEPL1hXU3dKbWdsWjFsVku>

Evaluation plan summary: 5. Curate and disseminate output as open content

Summary of Objective 5: Curation & Dissemination

- Curate output as open content

Updated:
March 2016



Examples of supporting and enabling project direction

5. Curate and disseminate output as open content

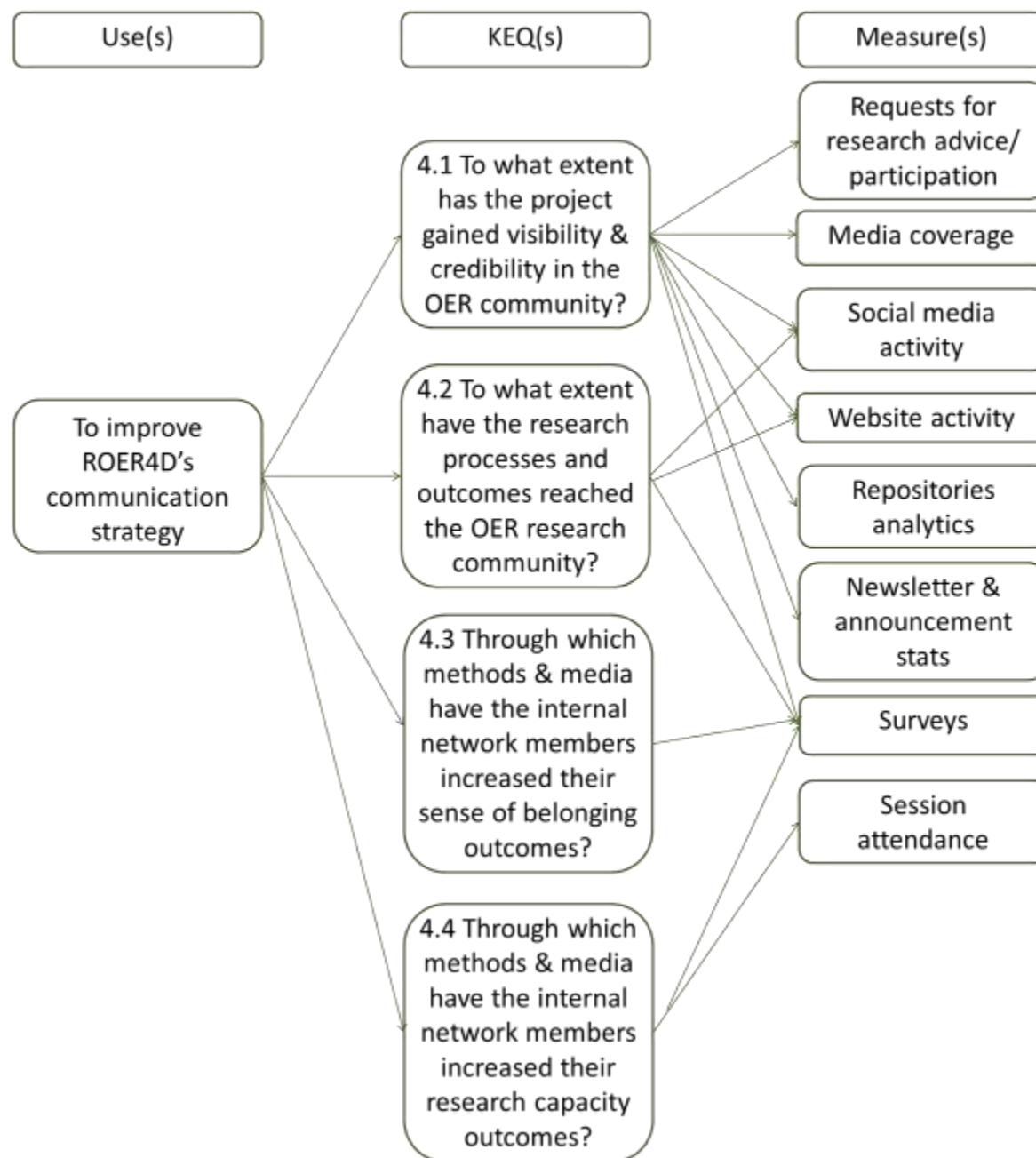
- This work is ongoing as the curation and dissemination strategy is finalised
- Iterative discussions have helped and continue to help shape the project curation strategy

Evaluation plan summary: 4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice

Summary of Objective 4: Communication

- Communicate research to inform education policy and practice

Updated:
March 2016

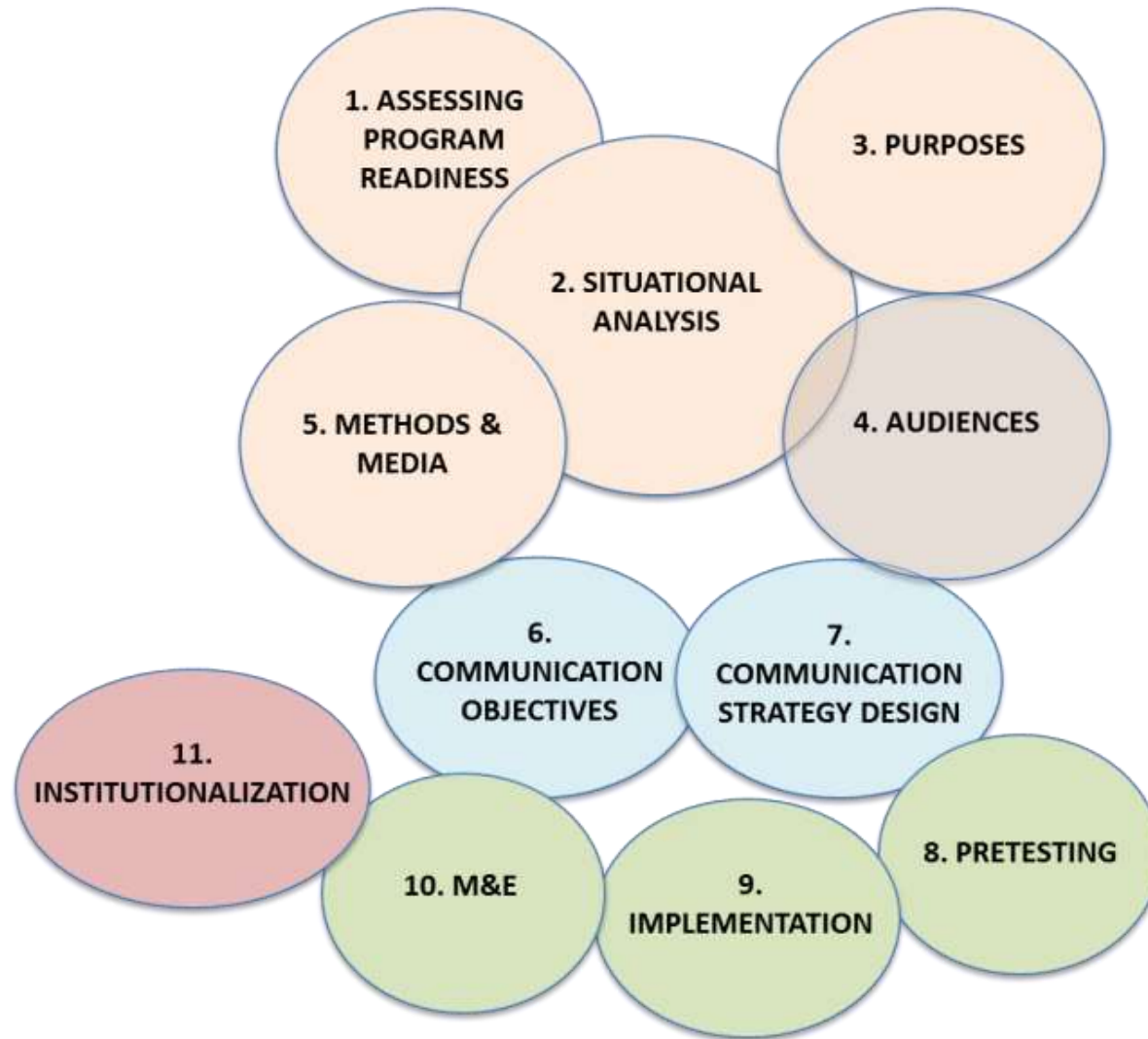


Examples of supporting and enabling project direction

4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice

- Communication and evaluation have worked closely together, partly because of the DECI mentoring processes as well as the structure of the project Network Hub team.
- Tracking (near) real-time analytics on a regular basis has helped to shape the project direction in terms of which communications platforms are working
- Sukaina will talk more about how she has found the impact of UFE on her work

Developing a communications strategy



Developing the communications strategy



Developing a communications strategy with DECI-2 team at Feb 2014 workshop

Defining purposes, objectives, methods and media


Purpose



Media

Four key purposes for ROER4D Communications

1. Visibility for project
2. Knowledge generation
3. Networking
4. Research capacity development



These have informed our communications activities

Specific objectives that support the purposes

Visibility for project

- To establish ROER4D as a significant OER Research project
- To establish credibility and receptivity with OER researchers and policy makers
- To engage those in the educational field to expand reach of project

Knowledge generation

- To share our research process openly with internal researchers in the ROER4D network and external OER researchers, to contribute to the field of 'open research'
- To share and communicate research findings that relate to use, adoption and impact of OER in Global South to the extent that ROER4D becomes a "reference point" in the OER field

Networking

- To build links among researchers within the ROER4D network

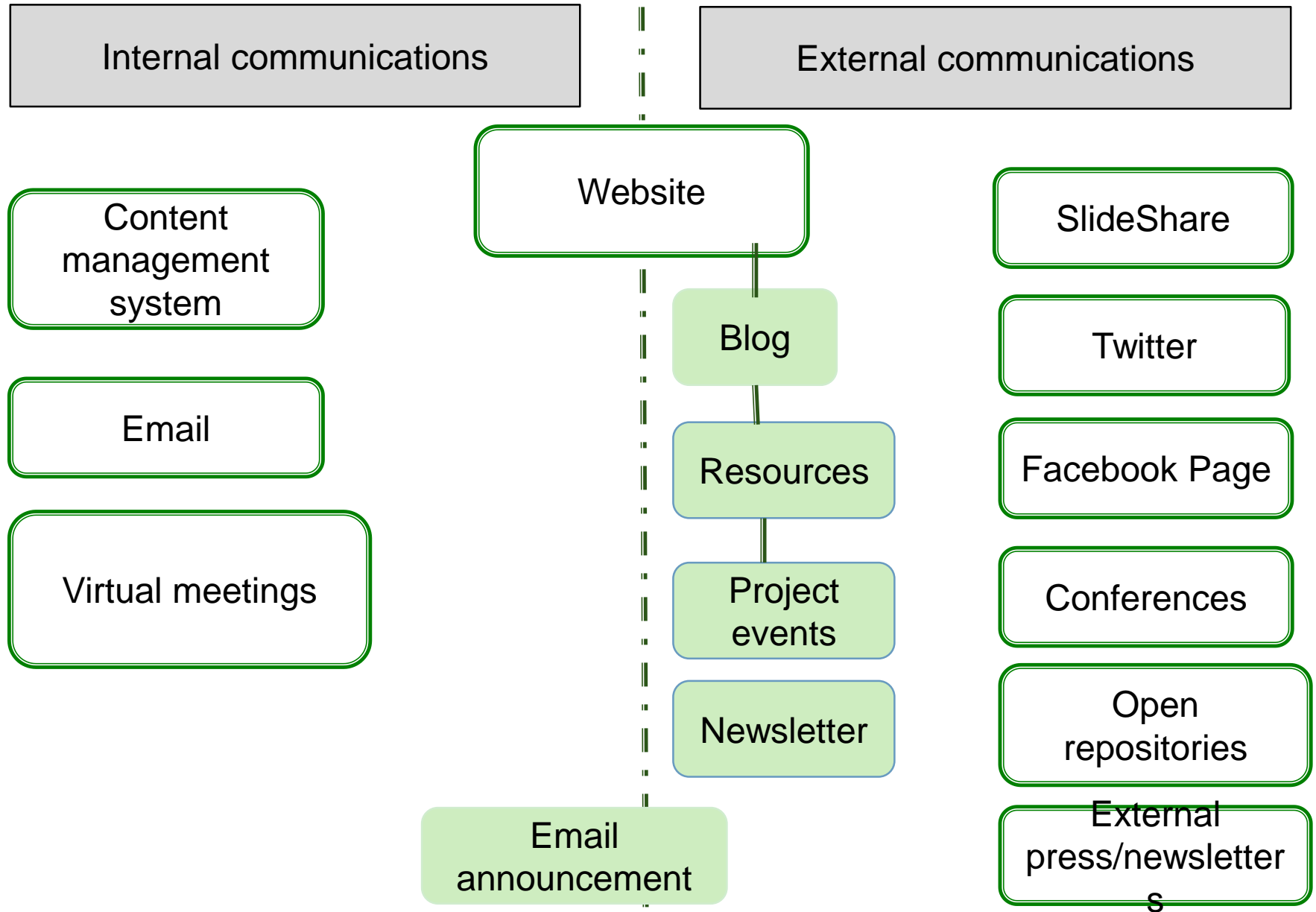
Research capacity development

- To share resources with ROER4D researchers
- To support and build research skills of researchers in ROER4D network

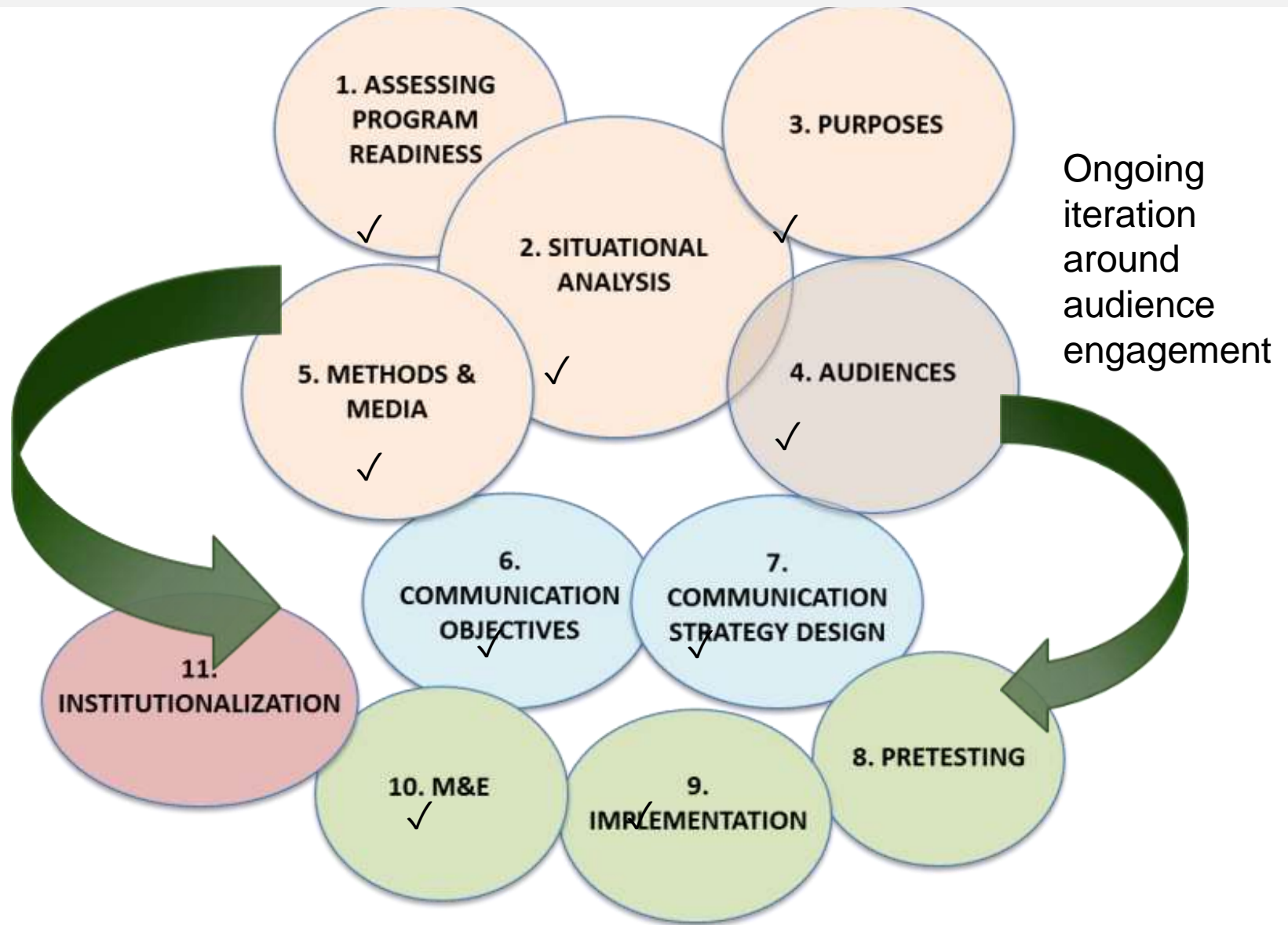
Communications strategy:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Om_oexqrUxzNz0imwLip6z3RDwIWU0R63L5iQgxIHgg/edit

ROER4D Communications channels



Communications strategy iteration



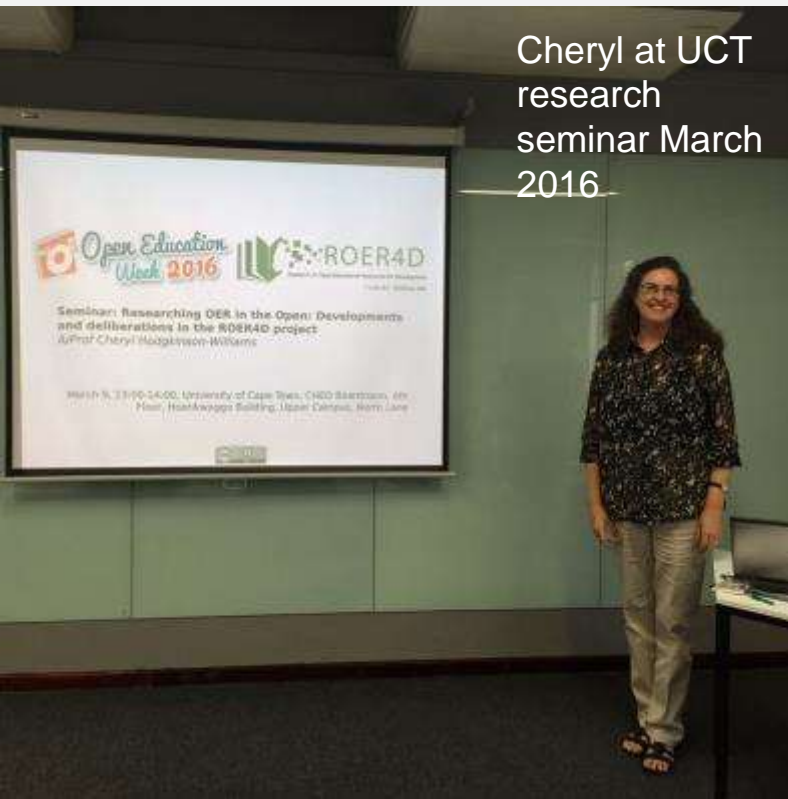
Audience analysis ongoing

ROER4D Key Audiences

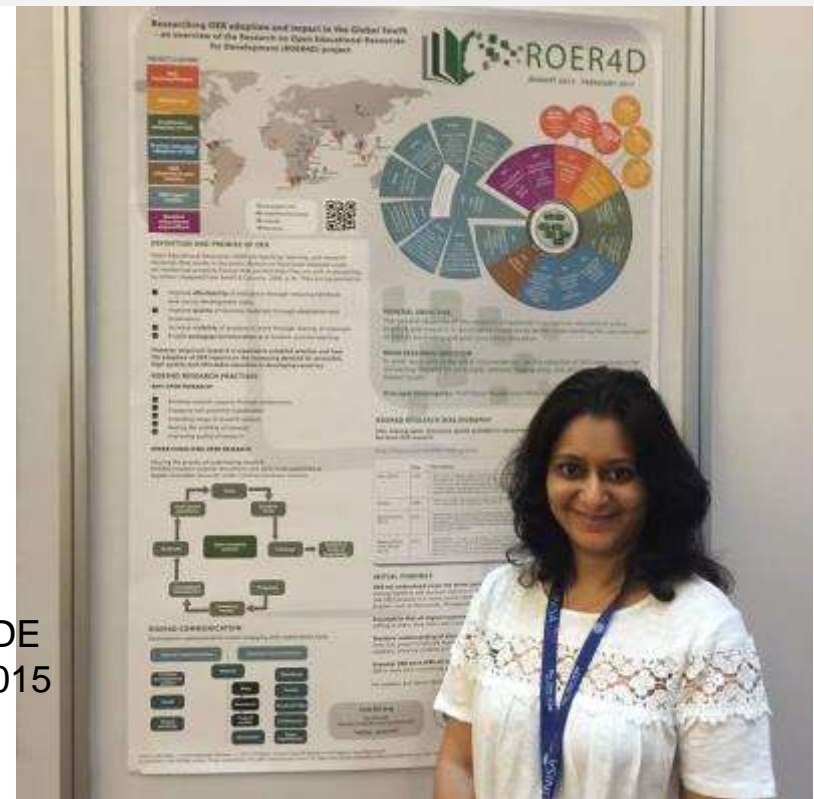
- 1. Government/policy makers
- 2. Teachers/educators
- 3. Institutions (HEI, Schools)
- 4. OER community
- 5. Global researchers
- 6. Funders
- 7. Development community
- 8. Others (specific interest/discipline)
 - Textbook publishers
 - Open data community
 - MOOC providers
 - Language practitioners
 - etc

More granular and
specific audiences
emerging

Examples of communicating via conferences



Cheryl at UCT research seminar March 2016




Sukaina at ICDE Conference 2015



Thomas, Sarah and Cheryl at AVU conference 2015

Examples of sharing research process outputs

ROER4D Bibliography



ROER4D

Research on Open Educational Resources for Development

/ˈɔːr.ə.dɪ/ - ROAR-for-DEE

<http://tinyurl.com/ROER4D-Bibliography>

This is a work in progress. Please feel free to make a copy for yourself and/or send us comments (thomas.king@uct.ac.za) of references that we may have missed. Regards Thomas King on behalf of the ROER4D Team

Overview	
OER References	List of references used in ROER4D research reports
Open Textbook References	List of references used in ROER4D research reports
MOOC References	List of potential MOOC references
Educational Expenditure	List of potential references on educational expenditure mainly in South Africa and South America
OER-friendly journals	List of OER-friendly journals
Activity Theory References	List of Activity Theory references
Methodological References	List of references used in ROER4D research reports



ROER4D @ROER4D · 15 Oct 2015

#ROER4D Bibliography on #OER research gets a shout-out in @czernie keynote. Link here tinyurl.com/ROER4D #icdeunisa

 1 1



ROER4D @ROER4D · 3 Dec 2015

We've published our first open dataset - @SCAprogramme blogs on significance for #openresearch and #opendata #OER roer4d.org/1968

 10 3

[View summary](#)

Invite participation



ROER4D

Published by Sukaina Walji | 71 · 19 November 2015 ·

Review and comment on Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams and Thomas King's draft paper 'Researching OER in the open' for OpenEd15 presentation
[#oerresearch](#) [#openness](#) [#globalsouth](#)

[Winning your first MOOC course](#)
[Defining 'open research'](#)
[Benefits and challenges of open research in the ROER4D project](#)
[Ideological openness](#)
[Recommendations to encourage ideological openness](#)
[Legal openness](#)
[Legal openness in contracting](#)
[Legal openness of research documentation](#)
[Legal openness of research data](#)
[Recommendations to enact legal openness](#)
[Technical openness](#)
[Collaboration](#)
[Availability/Discoverability](#)
[Revisability and Remixability](#)
[Verification/Interrogation](#)
[Recommendations to ensure technical openness](#)
[Practical openness](#)
[Recommendations to ensure practical openness](#)
[Conclusion](#)
[References](#)
[Acknowledgements](#)

Hodgkinson-Williams & King OpenEd 2015 - draft paper

Researching OER in the open: Developments in the ROER4D project - Draft paper
Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams and Thomas King...

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM



ROER4D @ROER4D · 19 Nov 2015

In the spirit of [#openresearch](#) review
[@CherylHW](#) draft paper 'Researching
[#OER](#) in the Open' up next at [#opened15](#)
tinyurl.com/Researching-OER



4



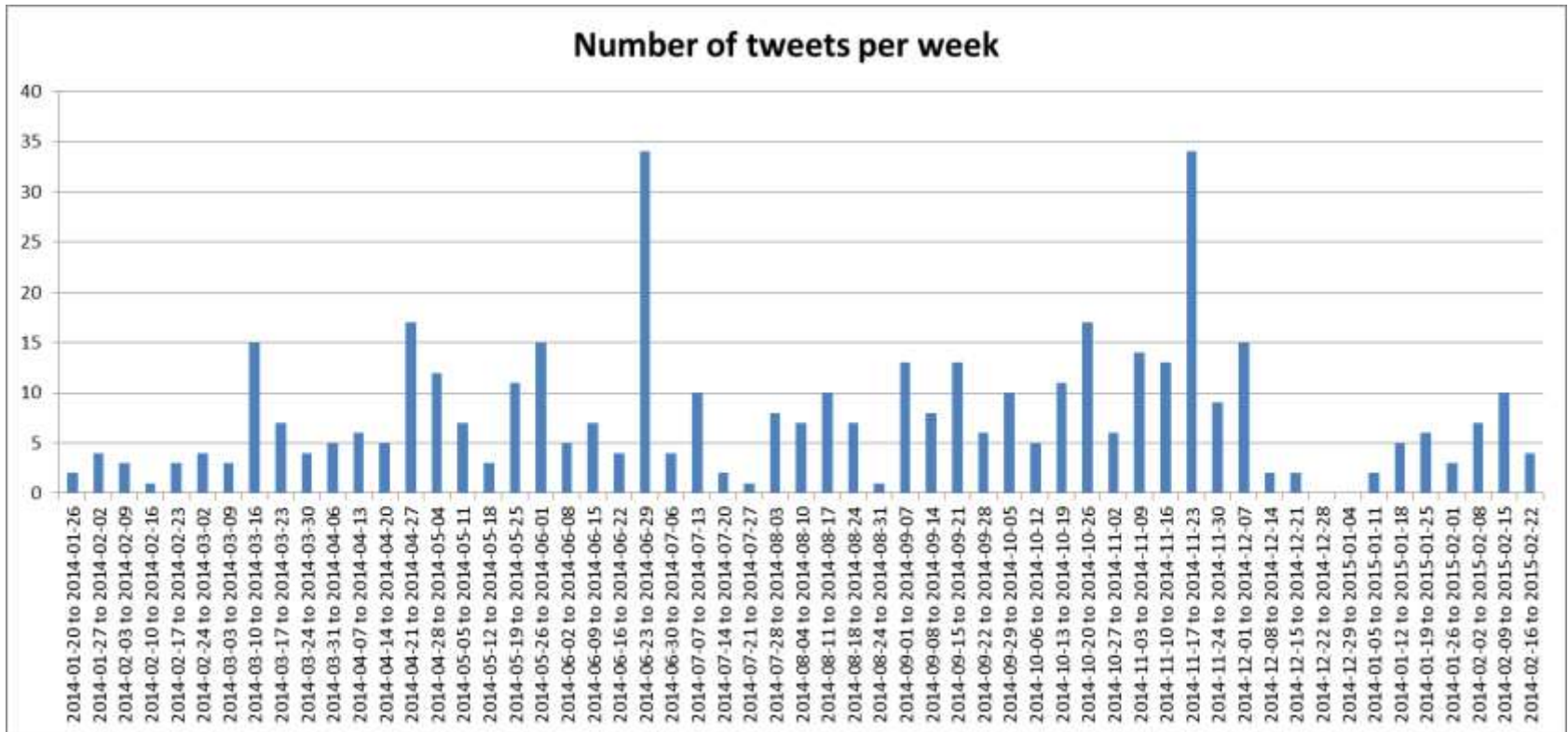
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[View summary](#)

Monitor and evaluate

Tweets per week



■ Average: 7.75 tweets per week

Data downloaded from Twitter Analytics; analysis conducted in Excel: grouped individual tweets into tweets per week

Some insights & examples of evaluative thinking in ROER4D team

- “How can we measure/track this?” “That’s a good measure!”
- Wanting & asking for evidence

[collaborative 😊]

- Evaluation feeding into strategic planning sessions – what have we found? How can this help us improve?
- Evaluation has become part of the project’s process in many ways

Data-driven decision-making!

Reflections on DECI-2 mentoring and ResComm process: on the methodology and process

Reflections on the ResComm process

- Developing a strategy not a linear but **iterative** methodology.
- Steps provided useful scaffolding for activities.
- UFE thinking influenced ResComm approach: design based, data driven, user-focussed audiences. Various interventions to ascertain audiences (e.g. interview with Adoption studies researchers Date, 2014; proposal analysis Date, 2015) to come up with revised and more granular key audiences
- Agile, experimental approach is enabled by UFE thinking. Stages followed 4 step process: **Planning, Action, Iteration, Reflection cycle** (the 12 DECI-2 steps come under these with some more or less important).
- Open Research approach has influenced an “open communications” strategy – lends itself to agility and iteration.
- Design becomes fluid and “in-practice” as well as what is practically feasible. Communications a perpetual beta!

Reflections on DECI-2 mentoring and ResComm process: on the team and sub-projects

What are the new or renewed insights & ways of thinking in communication that you have/are witnessing within your team?

Reflections on impact on the team

- Scaffolded process and methodology helps inform others as to the how and the what is happening in communications function
- Decisions have tended to evolve as a result of reflecting together (importance of team meetings)
- Understanding of why the process is as it is: encourage broader communications within team and from sub-projects (SPs are getting more involved and using ROER4D channels)

What worked: the mentoring process

What was provided

- Face to face sessions vital (Feb 2014 in Cape Town; April 2015 at Banff)
- 2-3 monthly Skype sessions to update on progress.
- Virtual support (live and via email) for development of specific objectives, mainly RR and DB.

What worked

- Pacing and timing worked well; supportive without being onerous
- Interactions contributed to developing the Communications planning: intellectual contribution to our project's communications.
- Motivating and added a layer of oversight.

What could be improved: the mentoring process

What could be improved

- Clarity of expectations of what to expect was opaque in the beginning and we found out/made our own??
- VeriComm template and integrated approach was confusing as not sure what we were meant to do with it – spent time on trying to make it work but not immediately useful for us in our context (with 2 separate roles)
- Concerned about time and resources in engagement with a process we weren't sure would be contextually appropriate
- Sometimes Zimbabwean and Kenyan based mentors couldn't join for logistical reasons – not sure who we had to keep informed so generally we opted for everyone 😊

Thoughts on DECI mentoring process for evaluation

What worked:

- Great to have experienced evaluators to discuss the evaluation work with and bounce ideas and strategies off of
- Learnt a lot about UFE; great to scaffold evaluation activities on.
- Regular check-in were helpful

What didn't work (at least some of the time):

- Primarily online interactions (only have met face to face once as I started as evaluator in Sep 2014 – 2nd evaluator on ROER4D) were sometimes tricky
- Integrating the DECI templates into the ROER4D process was often extra

What could change:

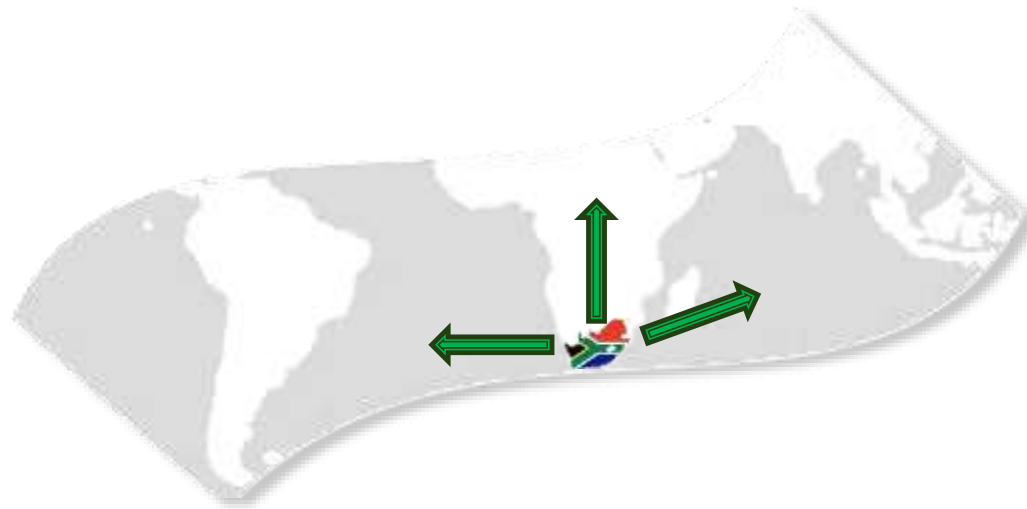
- Clarity of expectations – wasn't always clear

Why did it work (still a work in progress)

- Funder foresight to mandate this
- Supportive PI and Project Manager
- Team that treats Communications and Evaluation as important part of core work.
- DECI-2 mentoring process
- Our own interests
- Practical integration of ResComm and Evaluation in our team with Sarah doing M&E as part of her evaluation activities.

Evaluation next steps

- Continued engagement with the ROER4D Network Hub team and PIUs as the evaluation work continues (esp. around curation & dissemination as the plan becomes more concrete)
- Sharing insights & learnings with the rest of the ROER4D project and beyond



- Winding down evaluation work leading up to end Dec 2016 (= evaluation end date)
- Project end date: Feb 2017

What's next?

- Communications activity continues to meet the project's objectives
- Continued engagement with the ROER4D Network Hub team and PIUs as the evaluation work continues (esp. around curation & dissemination as the plan becomes more concrete)
- Engagement with (selected) sub-projects
- Sharing insights & learnings with the rest of the ROER4D project and beyond
- **Knowledge generation purpose and its constituent objectives come to the fore**
- Processes behind the channels adjusted to support the objectives
 - review and re-development of website (May 2016)
 - early release findings out for comment (July 2016)
 - encourage sub-projects to use ROER4D channels to communicate about their work (e.g working with SP4 assets)

But

- Constraints: resources especially for attending conferences which our data and feedback shows has been vital for networking, visibility and knowledge generation.

Thank you!

Questions?
Comments?



Links



Website: www.roer4d.org



Contact Authors

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Acknowledgments & Attribution

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